

Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project  
**Addendum to Initial Study / Mitigated  
Negative Declaration**

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SCH 2014112013

*Lead Agency:*

Western Shasta Resource Conservation District  
6270 Parallel Road  
Anderson, California 96007  
Shasta County  
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## Introduction

This document is an addendum to the previously approved Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project - Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), SCH #2014112013 (Approved Project). The IS/MND was recorded on March 6, 2015, and adopted by Notice of Determination on April 6, 2015, by Western Shasta Resource Conservation District (WSRCD), lead agency on the project. Minor technical revisions to the project scope have necessitated further review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As demonstrated in this Addendum, after consideration of the proposed revisions, the adopted IS/MND continues to serve as the appropriate document addressing the potential for environmental impacts from the project.

## Background

The Approved Project scope is for the restoration of native vegetation and ecosystem services on previously degraded agricultural lands along the Sacramento River and Battle Creek, located at the Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project site (the Site) in rural Shasta and Tehama Counties. The Approved Project was assessed for potential environmental impacts in the original 2015 Initial Study resulting in a Mitigated Negative Declaration of impact (the IS/MND) (Attachment A). The Notice of Determination adopting and certifying the IS/MND was filed by WSRCD on March 6, 2015, with the Shasta County Clerk.

The Approved Project's primary goals are to restore native valley oak woodland and riparian forest habitat and reduce wildlife habitat fragmentation within the Battle Creek watershed. A broad range of sensitive animal and plant species would benefit from the establishment of self-sustaining native plant communities in the project area. Restored and enhanced riparian habitat within the project area would potentially benefit federal and state-listed species, including Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB; *Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), Sacramento River Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) winter-run evolutionarily significant unit (ESU), and Central Valley Chinook salmon spring-run ESU, as well as non-listed species such as neo-tropical birds, waterfowl, and upland game birds.

Two primary objectives of the project are to establish a total of 306 acres of self-sustaining native plant communities within a three-year period following phased plantings, and to do so without significantly impairing floodway conveyance.

The scope of work includes site preparation including orchard removal, field preparation and installation of drip irrigation served by a newly installed well and planting a diversity of native plants across the site with maintenance for three growing seasons to follow.

## Applicability and Use of an Addendum

When a proposed project is changed, there are changes in environmental setting, or additional analysis is required, a determination must be made by the Lead Agency as to whether an Addendum or Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or ND is prepared. CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164 set forth criteria to assess which environmental

document is appropriate. The criteria for determining whether an Addendum or Subsequent ND is prepared are outlined below.

If the criteria below are true, then an Addendum is the appropriate document:

- No new significant impacts will result from the project or from new mitigation measures.
- No substantial increase in the severity of environmental impact will occur.
- No new feasible alternatives or mitigation measures that would reduce impacts previously found not to be feasible have been found to in fact be feasible.

The impact analyses and determinations provided within the original IS/MND were reassessed in the context of the proposed revisions and the above criteria. Based upon the available information, the revisions will not result in new significant environmental impacts or substantially increase the severity of impacts previously identified. No new significant impacts will result from the project or from new mitigation measures, there will be no substantial increase in the severity of environmental impact and no new alternatives or mitigation measures were identified to be feasible that were previously found not to be feasible and none of the other factors set forth in Section 15162(a)(3) are present. Therefore, the circulation or preparation of a Subsequent Negative Declaration is not required. As a result, per State CEQA Guidance, WSRCD has prepared this Addendum.

## **Project Description**

### **Location**

The Rancho Breisgau Habitat Restoration Project area is located on the border of Shasta and Tehama Counties. Most of the project area resides in Shasta County, with a portion of the project being in Tehama County. It lies on the north and west side of Battle Creek between the creek and the Sacramento River. The proposed project consists of restoring approximately 306 acres (along the right bank of Battle Creek and left bank of the Sacramento River, RM272-274). Township 29 North, Range 3 West. Sections 3, 10, and 11 MDM. The areas subject to this Addendum comprises the area at the southwest side of the Site and is a portion of the total area identified as "Project Boundary" in the IS/MND's supporting documentation (Figure 2) and the orchards in the areas at the northern, western, and southern boundaries of the site.

### **Project Description from the Adopted 2015 Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Rancho Breisgau is located on the border of Shasta and Tehama counties, approximately nine miles southeast of Anderson, California, at the confluence of Battle Creek and the Sacramento River (Figure 1). Battle Creek is the largest Sacramento River tributary north of the Feather River, with a watershed that covers approximately 360 square miles. Its headwaters are in Lassen Volcanic National Park, after which it flows through private property to the Sacramento River. Rancho Breisgau lies adjacent to the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project (BCSSRP), the BLM's 18,500-acre Sacramento River Bend Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which is currently under consideration for

designation by Congress as a National Recreation Area. In addition, Rancho Breisgau is adjacent to the Battle Creek Wildlife Area (BCWA) and near other public properties owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Approximately three miles upstream of Rancho Breisgau is the Coleman National Fish Hatchery, the largest anadromous fish hatchery in the contiguous 48 states, which releases Chinook salmon and Steelhead into Battle Creek to mitigate the loss of spawning habitat due to Shasta and Keswick Dams. In 2011, BLM acquired the Rancho Breisgau Unit (426 acres), which is comprised of orchards, fallow farmland and riparian forest. Prior to the Rancho Breisgau acquisition, BLM purchased a 714-acre riparian easement around the southern portion of the property (the northern end of Bloody Island). These lands have been used for walnut orchards since 1929, and portions of Rancho Breisgau and Bloody Island have been used for agriculture since the mid 1800's.

The Bureau of Land Management has partnered with River Partners, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, to conduct riparian vegetation and enhancement activities on 306 acres of the Rancho Breisgau Unit of the Sacramento River Bend. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages the unit located in Shasta and Tehama Counties.

The project will restore and enhance 306 acres of native valley oak woodland and riparian habitat at the confluence of Battle Creek and the Sacramento River. On 274 acres, approximately 43,712 native trees and shrubs will be planted within four different planting communities. The communities vary in species composition and density based on site conditions such as soil and depth to groundwater. Enhancement activities will take place on the remaining 32 acres, which will primarily consist of the removal of non-native, invasive plant species such as Himalayan blackberry and tree-of-heaven.

Irrigation will likely be supplied by 1 or 2 wells. The installed well(s) will provide irrigation water for the 3-year life of the project. At the end of the project, the well(s) will be capped and all above ground irrigation infrastructure will be removed.

This restoration project is designed to increase the quality and continuity of riparian habitat within the Battle Creek watershed. The project will restore native vegetation on previously degraded agricultural and floodplain lands along the Sacramento River and Battle Creek. Site preparation will include orchard removal and clearing of debris and weeds. Fields will be levelled and slightly modified to promote improved hydraulic conditions for floodplain wildlife. A well will be drilled and a drip irrigation system will be installed above ground to irrigate the restoration project. Native plants will be propagated from local material and planted across the site in a patterned configuration parallel to the directions of overland flow. Weed control and irrigation will be performed during the growing season for three years. Irrigation will be provided from the well. Detailed information is provided in the Riparian Restoration Plan for the Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project prepared by River Partners in 2015.

## Proposed Project Revisions

The proposed revisions to the project scope and text of the Adopted IS/MND (the Area Subject to Addendum) include the following:

- **Project Information Page- Contact person and phone number in the Initial Study's Page 3 of the PDF:** WSRCD- Philip Cramer 530-365-7332 ext. 203.

Revise to: WSRCD- Ross Perry 530-776-9402.

- **2.3 Project Purpose and Objectives in the Initial Study's Page 2-6 (Pg. 14 of the PDF):** "Two primary objectives of the project are to establish a total of 306 acres of self-sustaining native plant communities within a three-year period following phased plantings, and to do so without significantly impairing floodway conveyance."

Revise to: Two primary objectives of the project are to establish a total of 306 acres of self-sustaining native plant communities within a five-year period following phased plantings, and to do so without significantly impairing floodway conveyance.

"Establish self- sustaining native plant communities within a three-year period."

Revise to: Establish self- sustaining native plant communities within a five-year period.

- **2.5 Site Preparation in the Initial Study's Page 2-10 (Pg 18 of the PDF):** "A contractor will remove most of the existing walnut orchards in the Rancho Breisgau Unit, except for 5-10 acres retained to allow recreational collection of walnuts by the public and serve as a demonstration area for BLM."

Revise to: A contractor will remove most of the existing walnut orchards in the Rancho Breisgau Unit. Only walnut trees located near culturally sensitive areas will be retained, totaling approximately 1 acre across the entire project boundary.

- **2.5 Site Preparation in the Initial Study's Page 2-10 (Pg 18 of the PDF):** "Existing walnut trees will be cut down and removed as forest products, uprooted and removed, or a combination of those treatments."

Revise to: Existing walnut trees will be cut down and removed as forest products, uprooted and removed, piled, and burned or a combination of those treatments. All burn activities will adhere to Shasta County Air Quality and Resource Management requirements including having a County approved Smoke Management Plan (Title 17). The plan is developed to minimize air quality impacts of the project. Burning will only take place when environmental and air quality conditions are conducive to burning on County designated burn days. This process will ensure that there are no significant smoke impacts to public health from the project. As a result, impact to the Air Quality Resource would be less than significant from material burned under these conditions and mitigation measures.

All activities will be consistent with the Bureau of Land Management's Environmental Assessment for the project area. The current Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-CAN060-2012-30EA) covers all restoration activities except burning, which will be analyzed in an additional NEPA document in 2023. This will include a full suite of treatments, such as dead and dying tree removal, vegetation management, prescribed fire using a range of

tools (e.g., manual felling, pile burning, understory burning, mechanical treatments, mastication, etc.).

- **2.6 Irrigation System in the Initial Study's Page 2-11 (Pg 19 of the PDF):** "A well will be drilled near the road that bisects the northern portion of the site."

Revise to: A well will be drilled in Tehama County (Figure 3).

"In anticipation that planted vegetation will become self-sufficient after three growing seasons, all drip lines would be removed from the project area at that time."

Revise to: In anticipation that planted vegetation will become self-sufficient after five growing seasons, all drip lines would be removed from the project area at that time.

- **2.8 Plant Installation in the Initial Study's Page 2-11 (Pg 19 of the PDF):** "Woody species (potted stock and cuttings) and herbaceous plugs would be planted on the planting berms in fall 2015."

Revise to: Woody species (potted stock in fall 2023 and cuttings in February 2024) and herbaceous plugs would be planted on the planting berms in fall 2023.

- **2.8 Plant Installation in the Initial Study's Page 2-11 (Pg 19 of the PDF):** "remaining project understory (drilled native grasses and broadcasted forb species) would be planted during in fall/winter 2016 after seasonal rains have begun."

Revise to: remaining project understory (drilled native grasses and broadcasted forb species) would be planted during fall/winter 2024 after seasonal rains have begun.

- **2.9 Weed Control- Restoration Fields in the Initial Study's Page 2-11 (Pg 19 of the PDF):** "Various methods would be used to control invasive weed species during the proposed three-year project."

Revise to: Various methods would be used to control invasive weed species during the proposed five-year project.

"The berms would be subject to weed control during the growing season throughout the three-year plant establishment period."

Revise to: The berms would be subject to weed control during the growing season throughout the five-year plant establishment period.

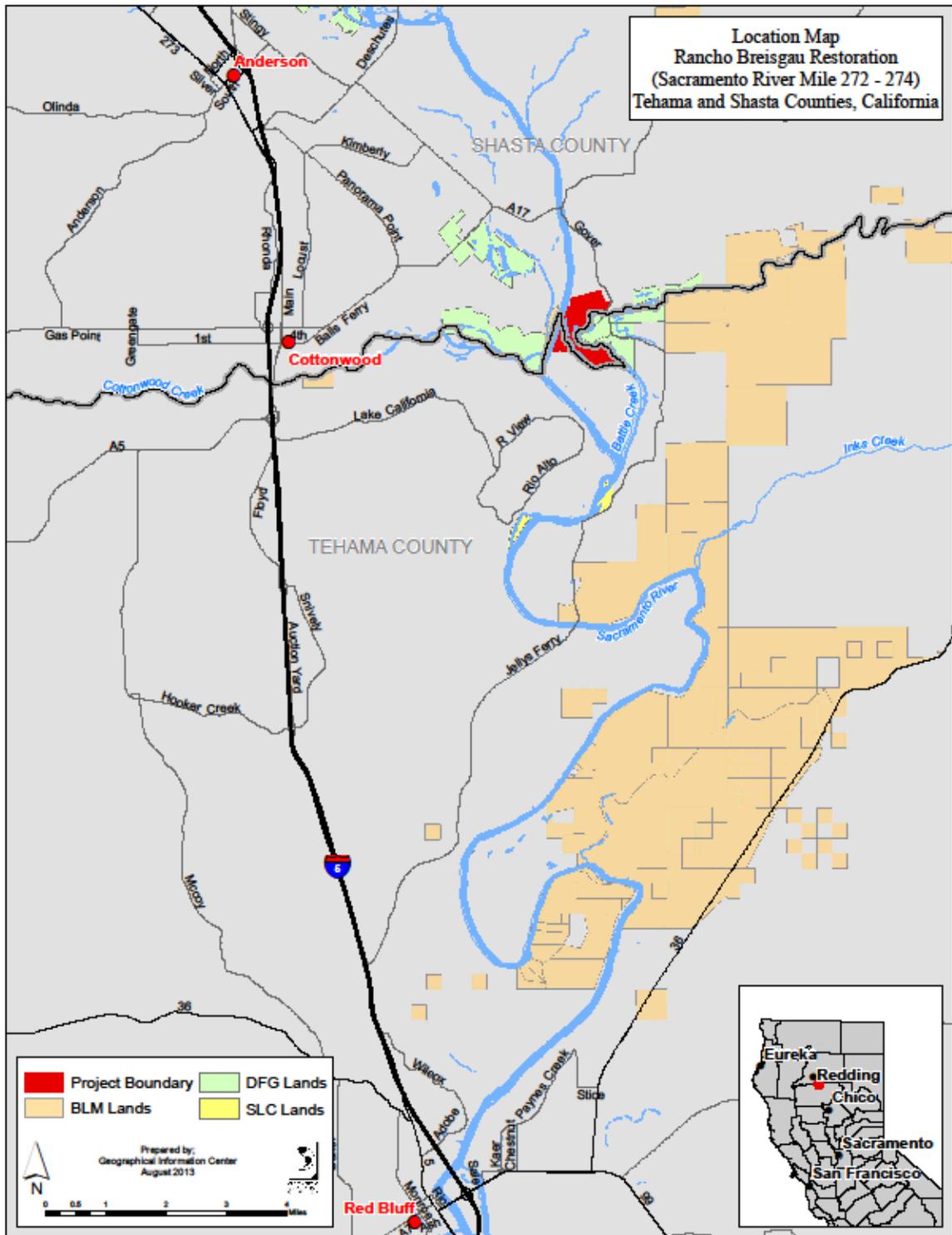
- **2.12 Tentative Schedule in the Initial Study's Page 2-15 (Pg 23 of the PDF):** "Planting will begin in fall after funding and permits are secured. Woody species (with the exception of willow and cottonwood cuttings) and herbaceous plugs would be planted on the planting berms in fall 2015, while cuttings are scheduled for spring 2016. The remaining herbaceous understory (drilled native grasses and broadcasted forbs) will be installed between planting berms in fall 2016. Phase I project

maintenance activities (weed control, irrigation, and replanting if necessary) would occur for three years (through 2018) at which time plants will have become established and self-sufficient.”

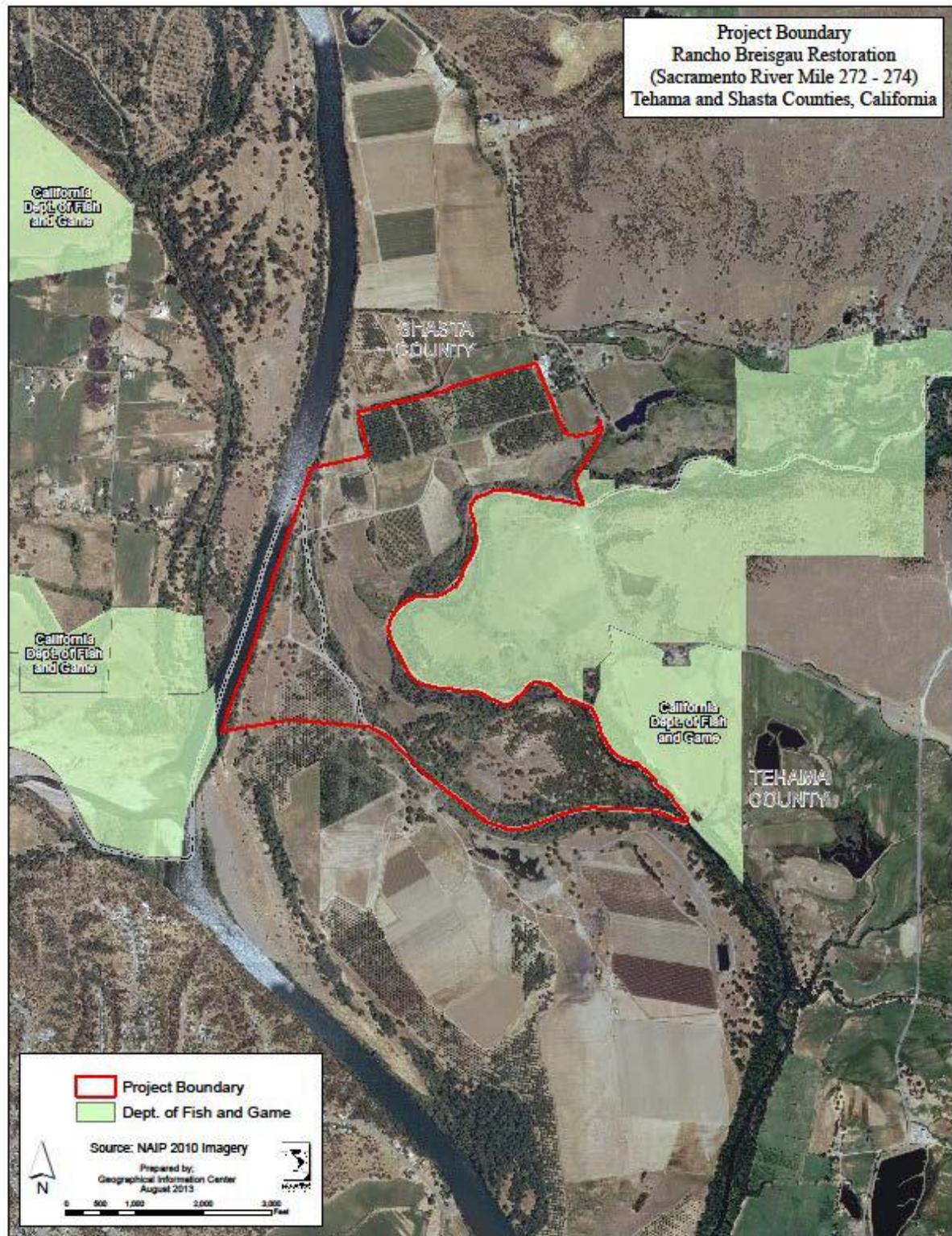
Revise to: Planting will begin in fall after funding and permits are secured. Woody species (except for willow and cottonwood cuttings) and herbaceous plugs would be planted on the planting berms in fall 2023, while cuttings are scheduled for spring 2024. The remaining herbaceous understory (drilled native grasses and broadcasted forbs) will be installed between planting berms in fall 2024. Project maintenance activities (weed control, irrigation, and replanting if necessary) would occur for five years (through 2029) at which time plants will have become established and self-sufficient.

The previously assessed project scope and work practices would be directly applied to this addendum, extending the same habitat restoration design and planning considerations, site preparation techniques, and planting and irrigation practices described in detail in the previous Approved Project's IS/MND and supporting documentation. The purpose of this Addendum is to clarify that the Area Subject to Addendum – described on the Project Information page and pages 2-6,2-10,2-11 & 2-15 in the Initial Study's supporting documentation - were included in the analysis and planning of the Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project, and to correct information, installation dates and timelines, and the location of the well provided in the 2015 IS/MND. The only addition to the site preparation techniques is burning the felled walnut trees once they are removed and stacked. This activity will not change the environmental setting, impacts and mitigation measures in the 2015 IS/MND, and will have less than significant impacts. No additional mitigation measures are required. Implementing the previously approved habitat restoration activities in the Area Subject to Addendum would not include any work in streams, riverbanks, floodways, or levees. There are no other changes to the Approved Project contemplated under this Addendum.

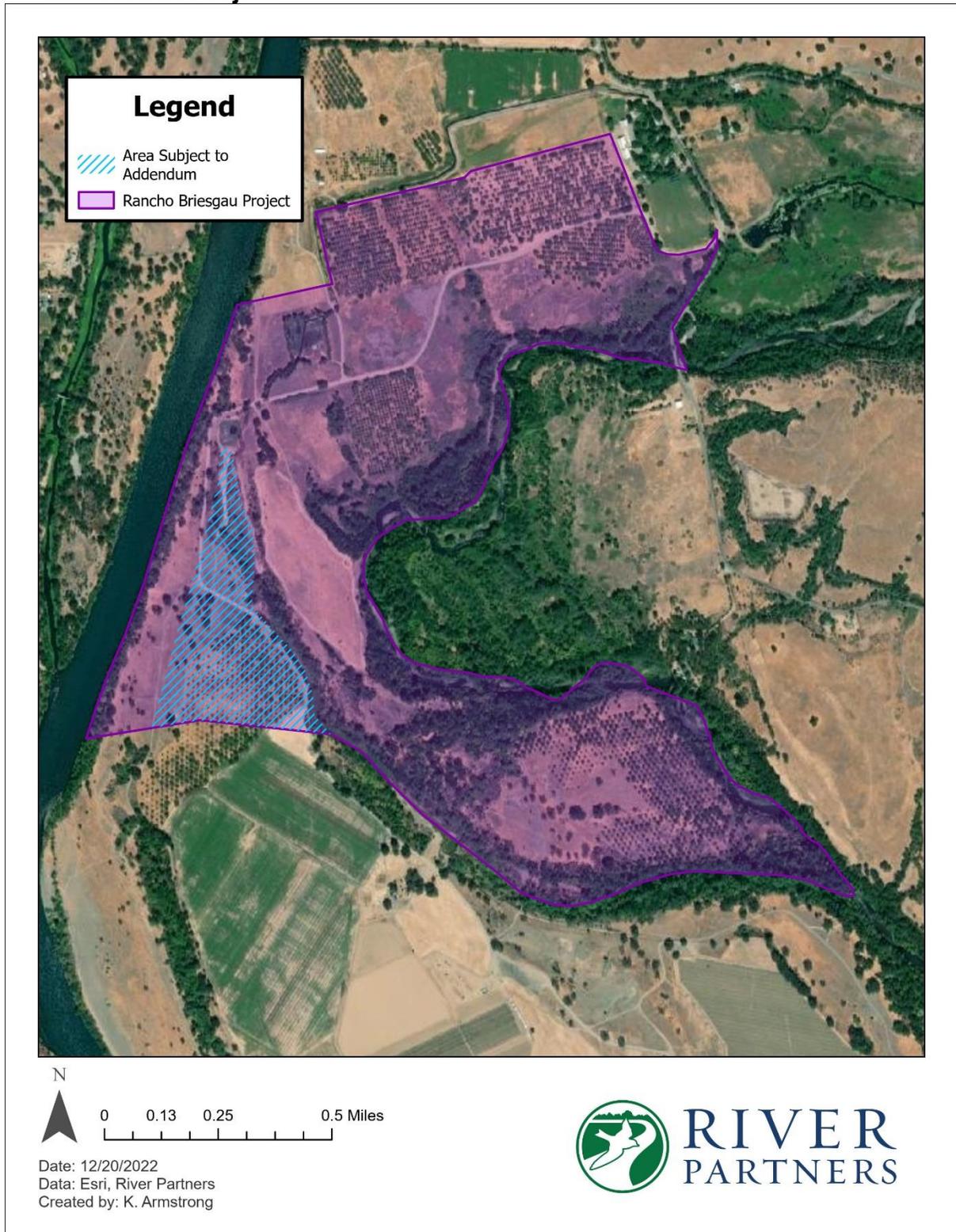
Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map – Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project



**Figure 2. Site Overview & Project Boundary Map – Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project**



**Figure 3. Well location subject to Addendum – Rancho Breisgau Restoration Project**



## **Anticipated Additional Approvals**

No additional agency approvals are anticipated to be needed in order to proceed with the ecosystem restoration project as contemplated in the IS/MND and herein.

## **Analysis of Potential Environmental Effects**

The 2015 IS/MND found that the Approved Project would result in no impacts or impacts that were less than significant. As described above, the proposed revisions would change the timeline and duration of the project, the well location and the retention of acres of walnut trees for public use, and include burning of felled walnut trees, without any other changes to the project goals or work practices implemented. This proposed revision and all available supplemental information were reassessed against the findings in the 2015 IS/MND (Attachment A). The Revised Project would not change the analysis or conclusions reached in the IS/MND, as the justifications provided are directly applicable to the revised project area across the various potential impact categories.

The Revised Project would not result in new or different impacts, substantially increase the severity of previously identified potential impacts, nor require new mitigation measures. No new information has emerged that would materially change the analyses or conclusions set forth in the 2015 IS/MND.

## **Findings**

Based on the foregoing and the attached, it is concluded that the analyses conducted, and the conclusions reached in the approved 2015 Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted on April 6, 2015, remain valid. The proposed revisions to the project would not cause new significant impacts not identified previously in the IS/MND.

The in-depth review of the Revised Project and all original documentation, scoping and planning documents etc. has allowed WSRCD to determine the project revision would not result in previously unexamined environmental impacts or in an increase in the severity of any of the previously examined potential environmental impacts. No changes have occurred with respect to circumstances surrounding the project that would cause significant impacts to which the project might contribute considerably, and no new information has become available that was not at the time of the MND that shows the project would cause significant, new, or increased cumulative environmental impacts.

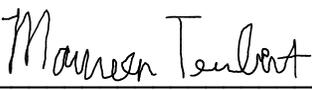
Therefore, pursuant to CEQA Section 15162-15164, WSRCD finds that no new effects will occur and no new mitigation measures will be required as a result of the project and pursuant to 15164(b), this Addendum was prepared to document the matter. WSRCD has determined that a substantial revision to the project has not been made and therefore no further environmental review is required at this time.

Name Maureen Teubert

Title District Manager

Organization Western Shasta Resource Conservation District

Date 1/20/2023

Signature 

Name Dennis Heiman

Title Board President

Organization Western Shasta Resource Conservation District

Date 1/20/2023

Signature 

# References

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# Attachments

Attachment A: 2015 CEQA Initial Study / Adopted Negative Declaration

Attachment B: 2015 Riparian Restoration Plan for Rancho Breisgau